



# **San Diego City Attorney MICHAEL J. AGUIRRE**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **UPTOWN MOTEL OWNERS ORDERED TO CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND FINED AFTER INVESTIGATION UNCOVERS DRUG AND PROSTITUTION ACTIVITIES**

**San Diego, CA:.** Drug abatement signs were posted today on the site of an uptown motel after a San Diego Superior Court Judge granted a permanent injunction against the motel owners. The Welcome Inn Motel at 1550 E. Washington Street was the subject of an undercover investigation by San Diego Police officers for several months for illegal narcotic and prostitution activity which was frequently occurring on the motel premises. From February 2005 to February 2006, San Diego Police Department officers made sixty arrests on the motel premises and responded to 149 calls for service at the motel expending a total of 325 hours there.

“We hope this sends a loud and clear message to other motel owners and managers that they will be held accountable to the full extent of the law if they do not operate their businesses in a responsible, lawful manner,” stated City Attorney Michael Aguirre.

The Complaint filed on March 30, 2006, by prosecutors in the City Attorney’s Drug Abatement Response Team (DART), alleges that the motel managers actively encouraged drug and prostitution activity and that the owners were well aware of the drug and prostitution problems there since 1998. In particular, the undercover operation involving officers posing as prostitutes and drug users documented motel management facilitating narcotic sales with known drug dealers and prostitution activity with known johns on the motel premises. Furthermore, in exchange for monetary consideration, motel managers facilitated prostitution activity by directing prostitutes and johns to certain rooms, advising prostitutes on how to conduct their illicit trade to avoid police scrutiny, and calling motel guests in their rooms to warn them of the presence of law enforcement on the premises.

As a result of this illicit activity, DART obtained a Permanent Injunction against the motel owners. As part of this court order, among other things, the motel owners are required to maintain uniformed on-site security, properly screen all employees, hire new managers, install security cameras and fencing around the premises, and pay \$25,000 in civil penalties.

(MORE)

This case represents an ongoing effort by the City's DART Unit against motels that cater to drug, prostitution, and other criminal activity. In October 2005, DART helped to obtain the closure of the Park View Inn Motel located nearby at 1299 Lincoln Avenue.

DART is the City's inter-departmental task force comprised of prosecutors from the City Attorney's Office, officers with the San Diego Police Department, and inspectors from the Neighborhood Code Compliance Department. Through a variety of civil and criminal remedies, DART's mission is to comprehensively address properties that have become a public nuisance by virtue of drug, prostitution, gang, and other criminal activity that occurs there.

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